

ISRAEL B. BIGELOW.

[To accompany Joint resolution, H. R. 29.]

DECEMBER 12, 1856.

Mr. QUITMAN, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of Israel B. Bigelow, respectfully report:*

That the memorialist was a contractor, in the year 1847, to furnish beef to the forces of the United States in the Mexican war, on their march from Victoria to Tampico, Mexico; that on the 14th of January in that year he left Victoria, with a part of the United States troops, for Tampico, leaving cattle and men in that place to supply with beef the brigade commanded by General Quitman, which was to follow the succeeding day. On the 19th of the same month, he was called upon by Lieutenant Elliott, an assistant commissary of subsistence, and informed by him that his men had failed to supply General Quitman's brigade with beef, on account of their having lost the cattle. The memorialist was ordered to return forthwith and, if possible, to obtain beef for said brigade, and if he could not, to notify General Quitman that he would deposit bacon at certain points on the route to supply his forces. The petitioner also received orders from General Patterson, to convey to General Quitman to the effect that he had found it impossible to obtain sufficient forage for the animals, and that those in his brigade must be put upon the same allowance of a quarter ration to which he had limited those in his division. In returning to convey to General Quitman these orders, and when about twenty miles in the rear of General Patterson, he was attacked, in both front and rear, by about twenty Mexican cavalry, and was shot through the left leg with a one and a quarter ounce ball, which passed through and fractured the head of the tibia, close to the knee-joint. Pursued by the enemy, with his limb shattered, he was forced to ride eight miles on horseback before meeting General Quitman. When he reached him he was suffering severely from his wound, but saying nothing about it he proceeded to deliver his orders. The general noticed his agonizing appearance and the blood streaming down his legs, remarked to him, "You are badly hurt." He replied, "I know I am, and expect to die; but I must convey to you the orders with which I am charged." He then informed the

general of the orders, in detail, before dismounting. After this he suffered seven days' torture, laid out in a wagon without springs, in proceeding to Tampico, over a miserable road, at which place he was confined in bed, without once being removed, for one hundred and four days, and for the space of three years, thereafter, he was unable to walk without crutches. He still suffers with a stiff leg and knee, covered with ulcers, and has expended a large amount of money in treating it, without reference to his loss of time, intensity of suffering, &c. He now memorializes Congress for relief.

The committee discover that the duty which the memorialist was at that time discharging was that usually entrusted to a commissioned officer. It was no part of his business, as a contractor, to convey even the orders of Lieutenant Elliott, though it might appear to come within the duties which the assistant commissary of subsistence had a right to impose upon him. But the orders of General Patterson, referring to a matter with which he had no concern, but one of great importance to the forces, warning General Quitman, as it did, of a condition of things which, if he were not cognizant of, might have resulted in the horses being without any forage whatever in a few days, places his claim for relief upon tenable grounds.

The committee, looking at the importance of the service he rendered, the gallant manner in which he discharged its duties, and the unfortunate calamity resulting to him from it, recommend the passage of the accompanying joint resolution, allowing the memorialist a reasonable pension for his support.